GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4622
ANSWERED ON:19.12.2000
INCREASE IN DESERT AREA
HARIBHAI PARTHIBHAI CHAUDHARY

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Government are aware of the increase in desert area in the country especially in North Gujarat;

(b) If so, the details in this regard and the reasons therefor; and the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to check the increase in desert area?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA)

(a) & (b) While the Government of Rajasthan have estimated that the desert is spreading at a rate of half a kilometer per year across Aravali hills, no such quantification is available for North Gujarat which is also affected by the problem of desertification. The reasons for desertification in North Gujarat are erratic rainfall, increasing pressure of human and cattle population on the already fragile ecosystem, recurring droughts, wind erosion, excessive pumping of water for irrigation and drinking purposes and depletion of vegetative cover.

(c) Adequate care is being taken to control the process of desertification in North Gujarat through watershed development under Centrally Sponsored Desert Development Programme and similar State projects on a continuous basis. A total of 209 watershed development projects are being implemented in North Gujarat since 1995-96 at a cost of Rs.52.25 crore. In addition, four Watershed Projects for development of 36364 hectares of Wastelands are also under implementation in North Gujarat at a total cost of Rs.18.11 crores since inception of Integrated Wastelands Development Programme.